

## **The H&N view**

# **Monument would show great nations don't fear the past**

**Memorial to internment camp a part of nation's history**

The Klamath and Tulelake basins' connection with the nation's wars are deep, varied and, in some ways, unique.

That's particularly true of World War II when the region was the home for such war-related facilities as detention camps for Italian and German prisoners of war and an internment center for Japanese-Americans, who the government felt were a security risk.

The Japanese American internment camp south of Tulelake and a prisoner of war camp southwest of Merrill were formally written into history Friday when President Bush signed a declaration making them part of a new national monument.

Federal agencies will develop a management plan for the 18 acres involved, which are already owned by the federal government.

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian Islands, an angry and fearful United States forcibly rounded up people of Japanese ancestry and moved them from coastal areas, which were considered war zones, to internment camps inland. The biggest was at Newell, a few miles south of Tulelake, which held up to 18,000 internees and operated from 1942 to 1946.

Internees had their lives devastated without justification. Steps taken afterwards — such as memorials and apologies — can't undo that; but they can lessen the chance that such can happen again.

That's why such events should be remembered. That process also tells people some things that are unique about the area.

They include the fact that the only U.S. mainland casualties of World War II were near Bly in Lake County, when six people were killed by a balloon bomb set loose in Japan that drifted over the Pacific Ocean and came down there; that the original site of what became Oregon Institute of Technology was a military hospital for veterans returning from the Pacific Theater with tropical diseases; and that many of the original allotments on the Klamath Reclamation Project went to veterans of World War I and II.

Those are some of the connections. That a few may reflect more on the panic that is a part of U.S. history also says that great nations shouldn't be afraid to deal with that side of their past.

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